

HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

P.O. Box 360 – 194 Putnam Pike
Harmony, R.I. 02829

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, October 18, 2007.**

Present: Moderator - Raymond Fogarty, Jr.; Chief Stuart Pearson;
Tax Collector - Kimberly Barber; Clerk - Ann Dahlquist;
Board Members - Louise Michaels, Jim Richards & George Kain;
Attorney – Fred Mason, Jr.

Absent: Treasurer – Sandra Owens;
Board Member – Milton Huston

I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:00 pm by Moderator Fogarty.

II. - Approval of the minutes from the September 20th meeting.

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the September 20th meeting. If not, he would like to call for a motion to accept them. Louise made a motion to accept the minutes. Jim seconded the motion. The motion carried.

III. - Treasurer's Report:

Sandy asked Kim to present her report for the month of September in her absence. Beginning balance September 1st \$390,029.14 and the ending balance September 30th \$391,206.68. There were no expenses out of the ordinary to report. One notable item is the Radio Expense, G/L #60310, which is negative <\$2,308.00>. This is due to a voided check from a prior period.

Jim made a motion to accept the September treasurer's report. George seconded it. The motion carried.

IV. - Tax Collector's Report:

Taxes receivable balance is \$114,857.22 as of today's date. Taxes collected in the month of September were \$10,377.08. Third party billing monies collected in the month of September totaled \$5,527.79.

Called Attorney Mason, as the Board requested at our last meeting, to inquire about the tax roll that we prepare our bills by, can we skip one to move ahead to the current one. He didn't think there would be any problem, he would confirm at this meeting. Attorney Mason said he had checked the by-laws and he did not find any reason why we could not skip forward. Jim made a motion to skip the 12/31/06 Tax Roll and use the 12/31/07 Tax Roll instead when preparing tax bills in June of 2008. George seconded it. The motion carried.

Kim also asked Attorney Mason about the procedure to follow for resident bankruptcies and property foreclosures. He said as far as he knows, in these cases federal law supercedes state law. Basically the accounts would just be put on "hold" until further notice from the government.

The next item would be that our Tax Sale has been scheduled with Bridget Williams of RI Tax Titles (formerly of Commonwealth Land & Title) for January 25th, 2008, 10:00 am, at the Station. There were 6 properties listed, of which 1 has already paid in full.

I have also spoken to our Accountant, Geoff Malo. We are ready for him to come in and perform the annual audit. He should be in sometime next week.

On 9/25 Kim attended a meeting to organize the Rhode Island Tax Collectors Association. It was held at the West Warwick Council Chambers. Annual Dues were set at \$30 and she will be a charter member. Others attending were: Jane Steere, Glocester Tax Collector (nominated Secretary); Laurie McCutcheon, Tax Collector Pascoag Fire District; Bridget Williams, RI Tax Titles (formerly of Commonwealth Land & Title) & Peter DiCicco of Opal Data.

Also, on 10/4 Kim attended an informational Workers Compensation seminar hosted by Beacon Mutual and received a certificate. Although we only carry a small policy here, it was beneficial to learn more about the coverage. One of the instructors, who is a Senior Underwriter at Beacon, is actually a Harmony resident, Todd Dalessio. And yes, his taxes are paid!

Louise made a motion to accept the tax collector's report. George seconded it. The motion carried.

V. - Chief's Report:

On 9/24 the Harmony Fire Department hosted the Northern League Drill at the Fogarty Memorial School for mass casualty training. It was attended by 9 fire departments other than the Glocester Departments

Also, the Chief spoke at the Rhode Island State House for a press release about 'Fire Prevention Week', introduced by Governor Donald Carcieri.

The Chief, Kim and Matt Floor of the IT Committee met, had a long discussion and are working together to form a plan to present to the board. This plan will explain what we need to do to get up to date on the IT issues.

Next the Chief presented an update on the compliance issues with VFIS and NFPA. Kim and the Chief have been working on the employee physical portion. Updating the forms and policies for new as well as current members. The other issue being addressed is driver training and documentation including background checks.

There is an upcoming meeting for the Chief and the Deputy Chief with Jeff Koledo of Fire-Dex. This is the company that we buy our crews turnout gear from. We have been having quite a few issues with the wear and tear quality of the gear and hope to have the problems resolved by the company.

On October 31st the Chief will be attending the Rhode Island Forum on Aging. This is a mandatory annual event that all police and fire departments must attend.

Also, on November 5th and 6th the Chief will be attending the School Emergency Preparedness training at North Providence High School. This training addresses school shooters and bomb threats.

The department has received letters from the Smithfield Fire Department as well as the acting Smithfield Town Manager, Dennis Finley, commending us all on a job well done at a mutual aid fire call on Friday, September 14th.

George made a motion to accept the Chief's report. Jim seconded it. The motion carried.

VI. - Committee Reports:

- a. Building Committee – none given

b. Strategic Planning Committee –

Ray introduced Dr. John Visich, from Bryant University, and Miss Sara Hana, a student researcher from Bryant University also. He commended them on exemplary work they have done in the past, their knowledge of the strategic planning process and their familiarity with the operations of fire districts in general.

Ray also gave a brief overview of board members and committees they had been chosen to participate in. Louise being part of the strategic planning committee, Milton the building committee, Jim the rescue committee and George, Sandy and Ray on the budget committee. All board members are invited to participate in any other committees as they wish. Ray stated that the Chief is working on recruiting members of the department to sit on these boards as required. These meetings will not be subject to public notice, as the committees will have to report back to the board. These sub-committee meetings will be posted on our website though, so people will know when they are going to occur.

Additionally, Ray recommended that on April 15th the board should receive a report from the strategic planning committee, with the thought that we will then have another month before the annual meeting to work on finalizing the plan. He also recommended of the \$2,500 budgeted for the cost of the Strategic Plan (\$2,000 Dr. Visich & \$500 Miss Hana), the first payment should be made January 1st, (½ to each individual) and the second March 1st (remaining ½ to each individual). An invoice must be presented and the work must be approved before the payment will be issued.

Louise made a motion to accept the above recommendations. Jim seconded it. The motion carried.

Ray spoke of what the Harmony Fire District is and what we are looking for in a strategic plan.

John then told everyone a little about himself and his background. He explained briefly what a strategic plan is. He asked a few questions of the board, to get an idea of exactly what we are looking for in the strategic plan. He posed questions to everyone to make them think in long range terms of where they want the district to be 3 to 5 years from now. We need to take a look at all aspects of running the district; building, maintenance, training, etc. Also we need to look at how we can lower our costs and therefore potentially offer more services within our existing budget. One example would be to buy or use more cost efficient equipment. We also need to keep in mind future requirements of the department, coming from the state and federal levels.

The Chief and Kim had gathered examples of strategic plans from other fire associations and departments and offered copies to anyone wishing to review them. Another discussion followed about possible inclusions in the long-term plan. The Chief also explained to John and Sara about the Town of Glocester Fire Districts and how mutual aid is provided to neighboring communities. Ray also distributed copies of an article relating to strategic planning and planning for the future in general.

John asked the board how deep in detail we would like our strategic plan to go. There are two different options to preparing it. The first would be the S.W.O.T. analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), it is not very detailed. The second would be the strategic audit. It includes the S.W.O.T. financials and all personnel, and it is much more detailed. Everyone agreed the strategic sounded more appropriate.

John and Sara will put together a list of copies needed for review. At a minimum they will need the past three years financial statements and Chiefs reports. They will also do more research. We will be touch to schedule the next meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee. John should be ready by the next board meeting on November 15th.

Jim asked John about reviewing of the strategic plan once it is in place. How often should it be reviewed? John said at least every three months. That way you can be constantly aware of the strategic plan, make modifications as necessary, but generally keep true to it.

VII. - Old Business: Addressed throughout reports.

VIII. - New Business: Addressed throughout reports.

IX. - Public Input:

Deputy Chief Michael Segee addressed the Board. He had noticed while reading 'Fire House' magazine on-line that there is a Florida city looking into charging for its fire services. Similar to the third party billing system currently in use here, to charge for rescue services. In another state they were checking on it as well, to see how the taxpayers are represented with that. For an example they mentioned that with car accidents there would be different fees if there was transportation provided or not. George said he has heard that there are departments charging fees for the services to insurance companies as well.

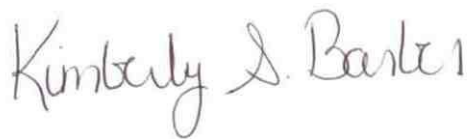
X. – Executive Session: None needed.

XI. – Adjournment:

George made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Louise seconded it. The motion carried. The October meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board is scheduled for Thursday, 7:00 pm, **November 15, 2007** at the Harmony Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly S. Barber".

Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector/Secretary